



State of New Jersey

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August 27, 2009

TO: Health Care Providers

FROM: Susan Walsh, MD, FACP  
Deputy Commissioner, Public Health Services

SUBJECT: Updated H1N1 Vaccine Information

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) met July 29, 2009, to make recommendations on who should receive the new H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available. While some issues are still unknown, such as how severe the virus will be during the fall and winter months, the ACIP considered several factors, including current disease patterns, populations most at-risk for severe illness based on current trends in illness, hospitalizations and deaths, how much vaccine is expected to be available, and the timing of vaccine availability.

The groups recommended to receive the novel H1N1 influenza vaccine include:

- **Pregnant women** because they are at higher risk of complications and can potentially provide protection to infants who cannot be vaccinated;
- **Household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months of age** because younger infants are at higher risk of influenza-related complications and cannot be vaccinated. Vaccination of those in close contact with infants less than 6 months old might help protect infants by "cocooning" them from the virus;
- **Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel** because infections among healthcare workers have been reported and this can be a potential source of infection for vulnerable patients. Also, increased absenteeism in this population could reduce healthcare system capacity;
- **All people from 6 months through 24 years of age**
  - **Children from 6 months through 18 years of age** because we have seen many cases of novel H1N1 influenza in children and they are in close contact with each other in school and day care settings, which increases the likelihood of disease spread, and
  - **Young adults 19 through 24 years of age** because we have seen many cases of novel H1N1 influenza in these healthy young adults and they often live, work, and study in close proximity, and they are a frequently mobile population; and,
- **Persons aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza.**

The CDC does not expect that there will be a shortage of novel H1N1 vaccine, but flu vaccine availability and demand can be unpredictable and there is some possibility that initially the vaccine will be available in limited quantities. The ACIP also made recommendations regarding which people within the groups listed above should be prioritized if the vaccine is initially available in extremely limited quantities. For

more information see the CDC press release which can be accessed at <http://www.cdc.gov/media/pressrel/2009/r090729b.htm>

Once the demand for vaccine for the prioritized groups has been met at the local level, programs and providers should also begin vaccinating everyone from the ages of 25 through 64 years. Current studies indicate that the risk for infection among persons age 65 or older is less than the risk for younger age groups. However, once vaccine demand among younger age groups has been met, programs and providers should offer vaccination to people 65 or older.

The details regarding vaccine distribution are still under consideration. However, the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) expects that vaccine will be made available through health care and public health providers in a variety of venues (e.g., private practices, Federally-Qualified Health Centers).

NJDHSS anticipates that providers will be able to request vaccine for their patients and record administered vaccine utilizing the web-based New Jersey Immunization Information System (NJIS). Information about the registration process will be provided as soon as it becomes available.

NJDHSS requests that providers begin to consider the amount of H1N1 vaccine needed to immunize individuals within their practices. NJDHSS thanks you in advance for your assistance with this endeavor; updates will be provided as new information becomes available.

For further information, please contact the NJDHSS Vaccine Preventable Disease Program at 609-588-7512 or visit the NJDHSS web site at <http://www.state.nj.us/health>.